

American Folksongs for Children



MIKE & PEGGY SEEGER

American Folksongs for Children

Ninety-Four Songs Sung and Played by

PEGGY AND MIKE SEEGER

from Ruth Crawford Seeger's *American Folk Songs for Children*

features autoharp, banjo, concertina, dulcimer, fiddle, guitar, jews harp, mandolin, mouth harp, pan pipes



These songs are like the language from which they spring: rich and full of variety. There is something here for everyone. Not only are these songs part of our history, but they are part of our present — they express things that will always be part of life, American Life. We hope they are to those who hear this recording as enjoyable as they have been to us all our lives.—Mike and Peggy Seeger

Disc One

1. Youder She Comes 1:28
2. Down Came A Lady 0:17
3. Who's That Tapping At The Window? 0:44
4. Such A Getting Upstairs 1:04
5. Toodala 1:33
6. How Old Are You? 1:24
7. Jimmy Rose He Went To Town 0:51
8. What Shall We Do When We All Go Out? 2:11
9. Goodbye, Julie 1:39
10. Goodbye, Old Paint 2:10
11. Oh, Oh, The Sunshine 0:22
12. Sweet Water Rolling 0:31
13. The Wind Blow East 0:54
14. Rain, Come Wet Me 0:16
15. It Rained A Mist 1:14
16. Rain Or Shine 2:19
17. One Cold And Frosty Morning 0:46
18. By'm Bye 1:02
19. Jim Along Josie 2:11
20. There Was A Man And He Was Mad 1:45
21. Riding In The Buggy, Miss Mary Jane 1:50
22. Billy Barlow 2:59
23. The Juniper Tree 1:46
24. Old Joe Clarke 2:41
25. Down By The Greenwood Sidey-O 1:38
26. Roll That Brown Jug Down To Town 1:04
27. As I Walked Out One Holiday 3:05
28. She'll Be Coming Round The Mountain When She Comes 2:27
29. Juba 0:57
30. Run, Chillen, Run 1:34
31. All Around The Kitchen 1:12
32. I'm Going To Join The Army 1:21
33. Scraping Up Sand In The Bottom Of The Sea 1:39
34. Old Mister Rabbit 0:08
35. Old Molly Hare 2:04
36. Oh, John The Rabbit 0:50
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38. Bought Me A Cat 2:47
39. Hop, Old Squirrel 1:05
40. My Horses Ain't Hungry 1:31
41. Did You Go To The Barney? 1:20
42. Have A Little Dog 1:11
43. Frog Went A-Courtin' 5:40
44. Little Bird, Little Bird 1:08
45. Free Little Bird 2:10

Disc Two

1. Poor Old Crow 0:49
2. Ducks In The Millpond 1:36
3. Jim Crack Corn 1:47
4. Eency Weency Spider 0:21
5. Dog Tick 0:31
6. Who Built The Ark: Noah, Noah 2:05
7. Mary Wore Her Red Dress 1:33
8. Pretty Little Girl With The Red Dress On 2:44
9. This Lady She Wears A Dark Green Shawl 1:10
10. Walk Along, John 1:32
11. Do, Do Pity My Case 1:18
12. Hanging Out The Linen Clothes 1:42
13. Lula Gal 1:19
14. Old Aunt Kate 1:24
15. What Did You Have For Your Supper? 0:37
16. Baby Dear 1:08
17. Johnny, Get Your Hair Cut 1:23
18. I Got A Letter This Morning 1:22
19. Rose, Rose, And Up She Rises 1:22
20. What'll We Do With The Baby? 0:42
21. Hush, Little Baby 1:06
22. Pick A Bale Of Cotton 0:56
23. This Old Hammer 2:05
24. The Train Is A-Coming 1:43
25. The Little Black Train 1:11
26. When The Train Comes Along 1:26
27. John Henry 3:10
28. Every Monday Morning 2:02
29. Going Down To Town 1:40
30. Sailing In The Boat 0:55
31. Blow, Boys, Blow 0:53
32. Fire Down Below 1:07
33. Sally Go Round The Sunshine 0:11
34. This Old Man 2:25
35. Skip-A To My Lou 2:58
36. When I Was A Young Maid 0:43
37. The Closet Key 0:42
38. Built My Lady A Fine Brick House 0:30
39. Where Oh Where Is Pretty Little Susie? 1:22
40. Jingle At The Windows 0:41
41. Adam Had Seven Sons 0:24
42. Here Sits A Monkey 1:04
43. Go To Sleepy 1:08
44. Monday Morning Go To School 1:07
45. Hush 'n' Bye 1:21
46. Turtle Dove 1:52
47. Mary Had A Baby 2:14
48. Jesus Borned In Bethlea 0:59
49. The Cherry Tree Carol 2:59



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—Mike and Peggy Seeger

This recording is a companion to the book *American Folk Songs for Children* by composer and educator Ruth Crawford Seeger (Doubleday, 1948 and 1995). The book is an extraordinary collection compiled by a mother for the benefit of her own offspring, two of whom, Peggy and Mike Seeger, have made this album as a tribute to her and her love of music and children.

Recorded at the Decca Studios in London, England, and at the Seeger home in Garrett Park, Maryland, U.S.A.

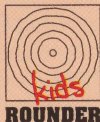
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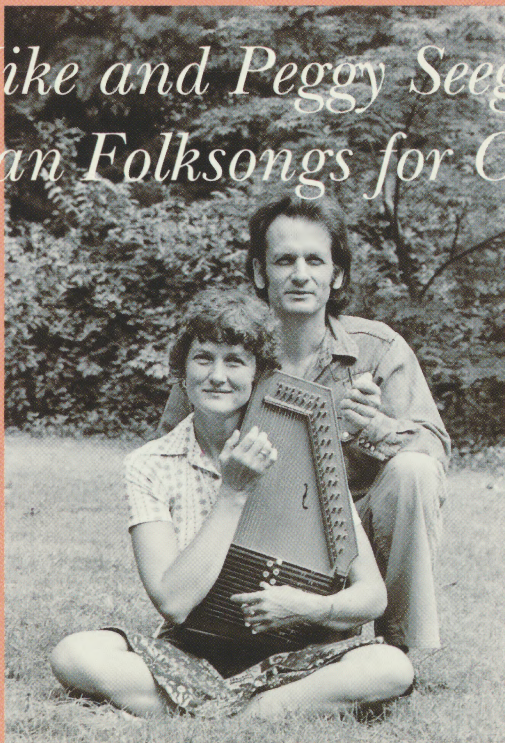
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4003 *At the Present Moment* (with Ewan MacColl)
4011 *Penelope Isn't Waiting Anymore*
4031 *An Odd Collection*



Mike and Peggy Seeger
American Folksongs for Children



Disc One

1. **Yonder She Comes** 1:28
Peggy: *vocal, dulcimer*, Mike: *banjo*
2. **Down Came A Lady** 0:17
Peggy: *vocal*
3. **Who's That Tapping At The Window?** 0:44
Mike: *vocal, banjo*, Peggy: *vocal*
4. **Such A Getting Upstairs** 1:04
Mike: *vocal, fiddle*, Peggy: *vocal, pencils*
5. **Toodala** 1:33
Mike: *vocal, mandolin*, Peggy: *vocal, guitar*
6. **How Old Are You?** 1:24
Peggy: *vocal, high banjo*, Mike: *vocal, low banjo*
7. **Jimmy Rose He Went To Town** 0:51
Mike: *vocal, mouthharp*, Peggy: *vocal, dulcimer*
8. **What Shall We Do When We All Go Out?** 2:11
Peggy: *vocal, guitar*, Mike: *autoharp*
9. **Goodbye, Julie** 1:39
Mike: *vocal, twelve string guitar*
10. **Goodbye, Old Paint** 2:10
Mike: *vocal, mouthharp*, Peggy: *autoharp*
11. **Oh, Oh, The Sunshine** 0:22
Peggy: *vocal*
12. **Sweet Water Rolling** 0:31
Peggy and Mike: *vocals*
13. **The Wind Blow East** 0:54
Peggy and Mike: *vocal*
14. **Rain, Come Wet Me** 0:16
Mike: *vocal*
15. **It Rained A Mist** 1:14
Peggy: *vocal, guitar*, Mike: *autoharp*
16. **Rain Or Shine** 2:19
Mike: *vocal, guitar*
17. **One Cold And Frosty Morning** 0:46
Mike: *vocal, mandolin*, Peggy: *vocal, banjo*
18. **By'm Bye** 1:02
Mike: *vocal, autoharp*, Peggy: *vocal*
19. **Jim Along Josie** 2:11
Peggy: *dulcimer*, Mike: *mandolin*
20. **There Was A Man And He Was Mad** 1:45
Mike: *vocal, mandolin*, Peggy: *vocal, guitar*
21. **Riding In The Buggy, Miss Mary Jane** 1:50
Peggy: *vocal, dulcimer*, Mike: *vocal, banjo*
22. **Billy Barlow** 2:59
Mike: *vocal, autoharp*, Peggy: *vocal, guitar*
23. **The Juniper Tree** 1:46
Peggy: *vocal, dulcimer*
24. **Old Joe Clarke** 2:41
Mike: *vocal, banjo*
25. **Down By The Greenwood Sidey-O** 1:38
Peggy: *vocal*
26. **Roll That Brown Jug Down To Town** 1:04
Peggy: *vocal, banjo*, Mike: *vocal, fiddle*

27. **As I Walked Out One Holiday** 3:05
Peggy: *vocal, guitar*, Mike: *vocal, mandolin*
28. **She'll Be Coming Round The Mountain When She Comes** 2:27
Mike: *vocal, banjo*, Peggy: *vocal, guitar*
29. **Juba** 0:57
Peggy: *vocal*, Mike: *slapping cheeks*
30. **Run, Chillen, Run** 1:34
Mike: *vocal, banjo*, Peggy: *vocal*
31. **All Around The Kitchen** 1:12
Peggy and Mike: *vocals with hand claps*
32. **I'm Going To Join The Army** 1:21
Peggy: *high, lead banjo*, Mike: *vocal, chord banjo*
33. **Scraping Up Sand In The Bottom Of The Sea** 1:39
Mike: *vocal, banjo*, Peggy: *vocal, dulcimer*
34. **Old Mister Rabbit** 0:08
Peggy: *vocal*
35. **Old Molly Hare** 2:04
Peggy: *guitar*, Mike: *vocal, fiddle*
36. **Oh, John The Rabbit** 0:50
Peggy and Mike: *vocals*
37. **The Little Pig** 1:44
Peggy and Mike: *vocals*
38. **Bought Me A Cat** 2:47
Peggy: *vocal, dulcimer*, Mike: *banjo*
39. **Hop, Old Squirrel** 1:05
Peggy: *vocal, slapping thighs*, Mike: *vocal, scraping banjo head*
40. **My Horses Ain't Hungry** 1:31
Mike: *vocal, fiddle*, Peggy: *autoharp*
41. **Did You Go To The Barney?** 1:20
Peggy: *vocal, guitar*
42. **Have A Little Dog** 1:11
Peggy and Mike: *vocals*
43. **Frog Went A-Courtin'** 5:40
Peggy and Mike: *vocals and guitars*
44. **Little Bird, Little Bird** 1:08
Peggy: *vocal, banjo*, Mike: *vocal, mandolin*
45. **Free Little Bird** 2:10
Peggy: *vocal, guitar*, Mike: *vocal, banjo*

Disc Two

1. **Poor Old Crow** 0:49
Peggy: *vocal*
2. **Ducks In The Millpond** 1:36
Mike: *vocal, banjo*, Peggy: *vocal, dulcimer*
3. **Jim Crack Corn** 1:47
Peggy: *vocal, guitar*, Mike: *vocal, autoharp*
4. **Eency Weency Spider** 0:21
Peggy: *vocal*
5. **Dog Tick** 0:31
Mike: *vocal, guitar*
6. **Who Built The Ark: Noah, Noah** 2:05
Peggy: *vocal, high guitar*, Mike: *vocal, low guitar*
7. **Mary Wore Her Red Dress** 1:33
Peggy: *vocal, guitar*

8. **Pretty Little Girl With The Red Dress** 2:44
Mike: *vocal, mandolin and quills*
9. **This Lady She Wears A Dark Green Shawl** 1:10
Mike: *dulcimer*, Peggy: *vocal*
10. **Walk Along, John** 1:32
Peggy: *vocal, dulcimer*, Mike: *banjo*
11. **Do, Do Pity My Case** 1:18
Peggy: *vocal*
12. **Hanging Out The Linen Clothes** 1:42
Mike: *vocal, banjo*, Peggy: *vocal*
13. **Lula Gal** 1:19
Peggy: *vocal, autoharp*, Mike: *vocal, mandolin*
14. **Old Aunt Kate** 1:24
Mike: *vocal, fiddle and mouthharp*
15. **What Did You Have For Your Supper?** 0:37
Peggy: *vocal*
16. **Baby Dear** 1:08
Peggy: *vocal*
17. **Johnny, Get Your Hair Cut** 1:23
Peggy: *dulcimer*, Mike: *fiddle*
18. **I Got A Letter This Morning** 1:22
Mike: *vocal, mouthharp*, Peggy: *vocal*
19. **Rose, Rose, And Up She Rises** 1:22
Peggy: *vocal, melody banjo*, Mike: *vocal, chord banjo*
20. **What'll We Do With The Baby?** 0:42
Mike: *jews harp*, Peggy: *vocal*
21. **Hush, Little Baby** 1:06
Peggy: *guitar*, Mike: *vocal*
22. **Pick A Bale Of Cotton** 0:56
Mike: *vocal, guitar*, Peggy: *vocal*
23. **This Old Hammer** 2:05
Mike: *vocal, guitar*
24. **The Train Is A-Coming** 1:43
Peggy and Mike: *vocals*
25. **The Little Black Train** 1:11
Mike and Peggy: *vocals and guitars*
26. **When The Train Comes Along** 1:26
Peggy: *vocal, dulcimer*, Mike: *vocal*
27. **John Henry** 3:10
Mike: *vocal, banjo*, Peggy: *guitar*
28. **Every Monday Morning** 2:02
Peggy and Mike: *vocals*
29. **Going Down To Town** 1:40
Mike: *autoharp*, Peggy: *banjo*
30. **Sailing In The Boat** 0:55
Mike: *jews harp*, Peggy: *vocal*
31. **Blow, Boys, Blow** 0:53
Mike and Ewan MacColl: *vocals*
32. **Fire Down Below** 1:07
Peggy: *vocal, concertina*, Mike: *vocal*
33. **Sally Go Round The Sunshine** 0:11
Peggy and Mike: *vocals*
34. **This Old Man** 2:25
Mike: *vocal, autoharp*, Peggy: *vocal, dulcimer*
35. **Skip-A To My Lou** 2:58
Mike: *vocal, mandolin*, Peggy: *vocal, dulcimer*
36. **When I Was A Young Maid** 0:43
Mike: *jews harp*, Peggy: *vocal, hand clapping*
37. **The Closet Key** 0:42
Peggy: *vocal, guitar*, Mike: *vocal*
38. **Built My Lady A Fine Brick House** 0:30
Peggy: *vocal, guitar*, Mike: *plucked fiddle*
39. **Where Oh Where Is Pretty Little Susie?** 1:22
Mike: *vocal, banjo*, Peggy: *guitar*
40. **Jingle At The Windows** 0:41
Peggy: *vocal, dulcimer*, Mike: *vocal*
41. **Adam Had Seven Sons** 0:24
Mike: *vocal, guitar*, Peggy: *concertina*
42. **Here Sits A Monkey** 1:04
Mike and Peggy: *vocals*
43. **Go To Sleepy** 1:08
Peggy: *vocal, guitar*
44. **Monday Morning Go To School** 1:07
Mike: *vocal, guitar*, Peggy: *autoharp*
45. **Hush 'n' Bye**, Peggy: *vocal* 1:21
46. **Turtle Dove**, Mike: *vocal, guitar* 1:52
47. **Mary Had A Baby** 2:14
Mike: *vocal, autoharp*, Peggy: *vocal*
48. **Jesus Borned In Bethlea** 0:59
Peggy: *vocal, guitar*
49. **The Cherry Tree Carol** 2:59
Peggy: *vocal*

When our mother made this collection of 94 songs in the 1940s, 'folk' had not yet made it into the charts, the discs, the concert circuits — or into the national consciousness. It was still associated with the rural backwoods and at that time folk-as-the-folk-sang-it was a really new sound. Standard musical fare for children, other than the hand-me-downs of the adult world, was what the music readers contained, digested so many times by censors and music editors that the resulting product was cultural pap: gone the meat, bones, nerves, muscles, heart (if indeed it ever had any). Both of us remember these outlandish musical creations, their unreal and idealized figures and comfy, pastel world. It is undoubtedly due to this background that our mother, her associates and, eventually, the readers of her books found the folk music tradition so satisfying and so complete.

The preface to the book is undoubtedly the best introduction to this recording. In a score of pages, the author outlines her own discovery of the songs, her joy in communicating them, her pleasure in watching a new generation of children absorb the music into their daily lives. The book is a documentary

about communication, with music as the medium. Despite the fact that folk music is now becoming an accepted part of the cultural and educational scene, it should be noted that our mother's comments on the choice of material, the methods of singing and accompaniment (and so on) are still valid. She has recognized that children are among the best critics we have and that their sense of drama, reality and tragedy feeds voraciously on whatever it finds. Children make and sing songs in the same way, and for the same purpose, as they play games: to prepare themselves for the adult world. They see that world all around them in its true violence, with all its bewildering contradictions — and they take on its sense of values whether or not adults approve. Grown-ups who underestimate this cathartic need of children to express *in their own words and actions* the birth-love-work-death cycle, and who feed their young on Dick-and-Jane, Walt Disney, on the pink-and-blue image of childhood, are merely feeding back into their children their own inability to cope. Children *are* violent, passionate, innocent, knowing and utterly involved in life. They are discerning and very observant. Adults who ignore this or

suppress a child's interest are asking for trouble.

It is upon this vital premise that the collection is based: the songs are about the world in which children must later work and live. It is a world full of gender stereotypes. The pretty little miss must "put on the bread for mummy" before going courting; boys must build railroads with John Henry, "be off for Montan" on the back of "Old Paint." It is a world of cause and effect, of earning one's leisure by spending the weekdays mending, washing, drying, and folding the linen clothes before wearing them on Sunday.

To children, it is a world of mystery as well, mysteries that adults are strangely hesitant to talk about or share: birth, sex, love and death. The children can sing about these experiences without having to delve too deeply and too soon into the future. In songs such as "When The Train Comes Along," "My Horses Ain't Hungry," "John Henry," "Mary Had A Baby," "Monday Morning Go To School," and others, standard grown-up situations are presented in their simplest terms and accepted as such.

With these thoughts in mind, we have taken the liberty of extending some of the

shorter versions of ballads by reinserting verses that our mother either excluded or did not know about. In some of the songs, she may perhaps have felt an uncertainty as to what was "acceptable" for other people's children. Such songs as "Down By The Greenwood Sidey-O" and "As I Walked Out One Holiday" are fragments of very old, very violent murder ballads. They were sung to *us* in full. But how would other parents feel? No precedent had been set and she was pioneering new frontiers. What passed in 1940, however, is reconsidered in 1970. Peggy sings to her children the full version of "Down By The Greenwood Sidey-O," in which a mother murders her babies, who come back as ghosts and condemn her to hell; Peggy's sons shiver and savor the ballad of a little boy murdered by a neighbor woman. After all, how often do parents caution their children with "don't talk to strangers?" Peggy's Neill, when presented at the age of four with a younger brother, became fascinated with the old ballad "The Two Brothers" (a full version of "Monday Morning Go to School") in which the older boy, jealous of the younger, murders his sibling. This had to be sung every night for nearly two months, after which it was

replaced by "Childewaters," in which a poor woman gives birth to her son "beneath the great horse-feet" in a stable.

With these memories in mind, we have added fuller texts to several of the fragments in the book. Our experience as singers and parents reveals that children, from quite a young age, love songs that contain stories and characterization. They can take, and understand, quite long songs. One child of seven commented (about a short song) that it was over before she could think about it. We feel that many adults who prolong the singing of children's songs past childhood probably do so out of a feeling of nostalgia and loss.

So as regards the exposure of children to the violence and death in folksongs: sing them what they seem ready for. Find out what the child fears and bring it into the open by singing about it. Children often feel guilty about their violent impulses; making them feel that these impulses are normal but not desirable often removes guilt, and removing the guilt can remove the impulse, releasing the child to move on to the next emotional stage. The folksongs portray life in a unique manner; they present an intriguing mixture of fantasy and reality and moving back and

forth from the real to the “unreal” can sometimes cushion the child when entering that new stage.

On the whole, we have tried to represent the book faithfully. We have only omitted one item in the book (“Clap Your Hands”). It was rather similar to the song preceding it. Our adaptations and changes come under the following categories:

Adaptation of Words

Our mother advocated this anyway, giving many suggestions (after the traditional text of a song) as to how the song may be used with groups of children. Where a line of text seemed awkward in the way in which we were singing it, we added or subtracted a small word or syllable. We would change the tense of a verb, substitute a different noun, omit a verse entirely or add a traditional verse that wasn't in the book at all. This came out of our own experience as singers and was occasionally necessary because of the type of accompaniment or the pace at which the song was sung. In addition, each of us has begun to sing the songs slightly differently with the passage of time. This is what is called the *folk process*, in which each singer adapts

the song — often unconsciously — to his or her own needs and singing style.

Adaptation of Tunes

It is now a recognized fact that the five-line staff is hopelessly inadequate to express the complexity of a folk song. Both of us remember our mother agonizing over this or that song, trying to squeeze the transcription into the corset of accepted musical notation. (Some of the songs were so difficult to transcribe that she had to play them over and over and over and over — thus helping us to virtually *osmose* them). When we sing, we unlace the corset and remove it. The song bursts out into its previously healthy form. This is not to say that users of the book should not try and read the music as it stands: it merely means that the top-line of music is a guide to the form of the stanza, its scale, rhythms, and cadences. Too much adherence to the written note produces automatic singing, self-conscious singing. To emphasize this we have, in several cases, included radically different versions from those in the book (“Pretty Little Girl With The Red Dress On,” “John Henry”).

Singing Style

Again, our mother was adamant about there being no need for a formally trained voice in the singing of folksongs. Indeed, it often hampers the singing and the sense of the song. The most beautiful sound is the voice of a singer enjoying himself or expressing herself, not what he thinks she should sound like according to a voice teacher. In general, sing the songs as children sing: simply and without excess vocalization. You will notice that *we* do not have what are generally called ‘good’ voices. We don't try to sing “purty.” It is the words which count and when you sing them try to remember the sense (or nonsense) of the words. No histrionics, changing dynamics or internal variations of pace or pitch are needed.

Consider the function of the song. For instance, “The Little Pig,” with its oink! oink! oink! is funny, and laughing while you sing it won't harm the rendition. It cannot be sung with the same serious and deliberate attack with which you would sing “Train is a Coming,” a song about death. “Go To Sleepy Baby, Bye” is a lullaby, meant to hypnotize a child to sleep. Now, lulling a child to sleep is an art — and it can be hard work. The child

is in your arms — or perhaps you are sitting down on a little low chair by a cradle. It is virtually impossible to use anything but a light-head-voice or a deep, low croon. You try to keep your voice low, smooth and monotonous. You are virtually *hypnotizing* that child into the land of Nod. Conversely, “Run Chillen Run” has got to run, got to be taken fast: therefore, a light, agile voice technique is necessary. And so on — to each song a style that suits its contents or its function.

The songs involving motion, meant to get the children moving inventively, are easier because the actions dictate a singing style. We have paced the following songs specifically for this purpose: “Jim Along Josie,” “All Around The Kitchen,” “Hop Old Squirrel,” “Hanging Out The Linen Clothes,” “Do Do Pity My Case,” “Skip-A To My Lou,” “The Closet Key,” “Where O Where Is Pretty Little Susie?” and “Here Sits The Monkey.”

Accompaniment

From the age of about six, Peggy's youngest boy asked that his ballads be unaccompanied, explaining that he “couldn't concentrate on the words when the guitar is around.” There are cases both for and against

accompaniment.

We quote from the preface to the book: "These songs do not need accompaniment."

We quote from our own experience: These songs do not need accompaniment. The operative word is "need," for both our mother and ourselves have *wanted* to accompany many of the songs. She was a superb piano player and composer and she put some of the most inventive and lively accompaniments that have ever been put to folk songs. We play folk instruments and hope that we do the same.

We quote again from the book, which gives a strong case *for* accompaniment on certain songs: "A strongly rhythmic accompaniment can influence noticeably the reaction of a group to a song, especially when the song is used for rhythmic play. It can provide a rhythmic framework for the tune. It can and should emphasize the pulse of the tune. It can give variety in rhythmic experience yet be of simplest harmonic structure."

Those who wish to use piano would be advised to read our mother's notes in the book. Those who don't play fiddle, guitar, harmonica, mandolin, autoharp, banjo or Appalachian dulcimer (the chief instruments

on this album) can use anything to hand. On several songs, we used unusual instruments:

- the English concertina (as in "Fire Down Below," "Adam Had Seven Sons")
- jews harp (as in "When I Was A Young Maid," "Sailing In The Boat," "What'll We Do With The Baby?")
- clapping of hands (as in "All Around The Kitchen")
- scraping on the skin of a drum, or banjo skin (as in "Hop, Old Squirrel")

You can slap your knees, clap your hands, tap your feet. The engineer at one of the recording sessions couldn't find enough pillows with which to silence for Mike's heavy footwear and the tapping comes through even though Mike took his shoes off. In "Juba," Mike opened his mouth to the position it would be in if he was saying an "Aw." Then he slapped his cheeks smartly and lightly with two or three fingers of each hand. The hollow chamber of the mouth acts like a drum and changing the position of his tongue he created a "tune."

Rhythm "instruments" can be made out of anything to hand: a couple of spoons or blocks beaten together, pots and pans, bells, bits of metal — literally anything. Children

love to participate in the playing of a musical instrument even if they are only putting their hands across the strings to stop the sound. With two pencils, one can beat (lightly) on the strings of a banjo, guitar, mandolin or fiddle. This has produced the appealing accompaniment to "Such A Getting Upstairs": Michael is playing the fiddle and Peggy, standing behind him, is beating the rhythm (lightly!) on the bottom strings of the fiddle with two pencils.

Don't be afraid of monotony or simplicity. "Mary Wore Her Red Dress" and "When The Train Comes Along" are good examples of this. All these songs carry themselves, and anything you add in the way of backing is for your own amusement, not because the song cannot be sung without it.

Finally,

No song is too short. Children make up bits and pieces of song all the time and are quite satisfied to chant them over and over. They even take refrains and chains of nonsense syllables and use them for skipping, jumping, any kind of motion. If a song seems too short, sing it twice, thrice or a hundred times. The kids will stop you when they want

a change. Conversely, no song is too long as long as you hold the child's attention. If you alternate the active and quiet songs, the long and the short, the serious and funny, the fast and slow, you'll find that children can take almost anything.

Singing is communication. These songs are like the language from which they spring: rich and full of variety. There is something there for everyone. Not only are the songs part of our past but they are part of our present for they express things that will always be part of life — American life. We hope they are to those who hear these discs as enjoyable as they have been to us all our lives.

—Peggy and Michael Seeger

1978 and 1996

**Mike and Peggy
Seeger**
**American Folk
Songs for
Children**
Disc 1



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